# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:135
ANSWERED ON:22.11.2006
PANCHAYATS WITHOUT POST OFFICES
Mehta Shri Bhubneshwar Prasad

**Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:**

(a) whether there are no Post Offices in 2000 panchayats of the country;

(b) whether people living in such Panchayats have to cover five Kilometers to avail postal facility;

(c) if so, the State-wise number of Panchayats without Post Offices; and

(d) the time by which the Government proposes to open Post Offices in such Panchayats and in those Panchayats where people have to travel more than five Kilometers to avail postal facilities?

## Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) to (d) Postal facilities are provided across the country and cover all Panchayats. However, Post Offices can be opened in an area only when the prescribed norms relating to population, distance and income are fulfilled. All areas, including areas falling within Panchayats, have been provided Post Offices wherever justified as per the norms. A copy of the norms is given in Annexure-I. As per these norms, Post Offices can be opened in normal rural areas having a population of 3000 persons, at a distance of at least 3 kms. from the nearest post office, subject to fulfillment of the income norm, under which at least 33 1/3 % of the cost is to be covered, thereby giving a subsidy of 66 2/3 % . The norms are further relaxed in the case of hilly, tribal and desert areas where the population norm is 500 persons and the income cost coverage is only 15% with a subsidy of 85%.

As per available data, of September, 2003, there were 3752 Gram Panchayat villages where a post office was justified as per population and distance norms but not as per the income norm. Postal Circle wise details of such Gram Panchayat villages are given in Annexure-II.

As per the present rules, when an area becomes justified, as per norms, for opening of a post office, it can be provided by relocation of an existing post office from another area where it is no longer justified. This is a continuing process. As no Plan targets for opening of post offices are being assigned after 2003-04, in consonance with the Tenth Five Year Plan directives, no time frame can be fixed for opening of post offices in Panchayats without post offices or in those Panchayats where people have to travel more than 5 kms. to avail postal facilities.

ANNEXURE-I
Norms for opening and retention of post offices

Government is committed to provide postal counter facilities according to the following distance, population and income norms:

(i) Population and Distance Norms

(a) Urban area - Population over 20 lakhs, 1.5 Kms distance from nearest post office

(b) Urban area - Population upto 20 lakhs, 2 Kms distance from nearest post office

(c) Normal rural area - Population 3000, 3 Kms distance from nearest post office

(d) Hilly, tribal, desert - population 500 for individual village and 1000 for group of villages, 3 Kms distance from nearest post office No two delivery offices should be closer than 5 Kms.

(ii) Income Norms for opening of Departmental Sub Post Offices

(a) Normal Rural areas - Permissible limit of loss - Rs. 2400 per annum

(b) Tribal and hilly areas - Permissible limit of loss - Rs.4800 per annum

In urban areas, the post office should initially be self-supporting, and, at the time of the first annual review, it should show a profit of 5% to be eligible for further retention.

(iii) Income norms for Branch Post Offices

(a) Normal rural areas - percentage of income to cost 33 1/3%, i.e. subsidy of 66 2/3%

(b) Hilly, tribal, desert areas - percentage of income to cost 15%, i.e. subsidy of 85%

ANNEXURE - II No. of Gram Panchayat Villages which justify opening of Post Offices on two norms of distance and population (September 2003)

| Sl. No. | Name of Circle | No. of GP villages which justify opening of Post Office on two norms of distance and population (Sept. 2003) |
|---|---|---|
| | ANDHRA PRADESH | 52 |
| | ASSAM | 50 |
| | BIHAR | 277 |
| | CHHATTISGARH | 306 |
| | DELHI | NIL |
| | GUJARAT | 240 |
| | HARYANA | 95 |
| | HIMACHAL PRADESH | 35 |
| | JAMMU & KASHMIR | 94 |
| | JHARKHAND | 218 |
| | KARNATAKA | 211 |
| | KERALA | NIL |
| | MADHYA PRADESH | 173 |
| | MAHARASHTRA | 346 |
| | GOA | 1 |
| | NORTH EAST | 379 |
| | ORISSA | 141 |
| | PUNJAB | 5 |
| | RAJASTHAN | 65 |
| | TAMIL NADU | NIL |
| | UTTAR PRADESH | 974 |
| | UTTARANCHAL | 52 |
| | WEST BENGAL | 32 |
| | A & N ISLAND | 1 |
| | SIKKIM | 5 |
| | TOTAL | 3752 |